SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE

FY 2005
1st Quarter
Report

Water Lines

SDW Hotline Report

In This Issue

Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & e-mail)	Percent of Total* Questions
Local Drinking Water Quality	780	16
Tap Water Testing	527**	11
Lead	263	5
Consumer Confidence Reports	241	5
Public Notification	240	5
Coliforms	237	5
Household Wells	204	4
MCL List	193	4
Home Water Treatment Units	190	4
Safe Drinking Water Act	187	4

**A total of 4,991 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and e-mail) in the 1st Quarter of FY 2004.*
***Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 15 percent of the tap water testing questions.*

Calls	E-mails	Total***
2,617	307	2,924

****A single call or e-mail may generate multiple questions.*

Published Quarterly

See past reports at

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/hotline

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791

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Operated by Booz Allen Hamilton
Under Contract #GS-10F-0090J

What's New

New Publications:

Research materials related to the proposed Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/stage2/pdfs/bibliography_stage2_frnotice122304.pdf.

Variances and Exemptions: A Quick Reference Guide is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/pdfs/qrguide_smallsystems_variance-exemptions.pdf.

7 Easy Steps to Submitting your Emergency Response Plan (ERP) Certification is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/pubs/seven_easy_steps.pdf.

Articles, fact sheets, and more information about the 30th anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwa/30th.

The Chinese translation of *Water on Tap: What You Need to Know* is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/wot/pdfs/book_waterontap_chinesetrans_full.pdf.

Emergency Response Plan Guidance for Small and Medium Community Water Systems is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/pubs/small_medium_ERP_guidance040704.pdf.

The November 23, 2004, memorandum clarifying the requirements for collecting samples and calculating compliance under the Lead and Copper Rule and a fact sheet discussing the clarification are available at www.epa.gov/safewater/lcrmr/implement.html.

General implementation guidance and technical guidance for the turbidity provisions of the Long Term 1 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT1ESWTR) are available at www.epa.gov/safewater/mdbp/lt1eswtr.html.

Ordering information and supplemental materials for the training video *Tap Into Prevention: Drinking Water Information for Health Care Providers* are available at www.epa.gov/safewater/healthcare.

Find an answer or ask a question about drinking water online at safewater.custhelp.com.

Information about private household drinking water wells is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells.

Did You Know?

Nearly 97 percent of the world's water is salty or otherwise undrinkable, and the other two percent is locked away in ice caps and glaciers (EPA, Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water).

Calendar:

Who?	What?	Where?	When?
ASDWA	Annual Conference	Austin, TX	October 4-6, 2004
EPA	Lead Service Line Replacement Workshop	College Park, GA	October 26-27, 2004
NDWAC	Public Meeting	Atlanta, GA	December 1-2, 2004
EPA	Workshop on Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities	Washington, DC	December 7, 2004
NDWAC	Water Security Working Group Meeting	Washington, DC	December 15-17, 2004
EPA	Proposed Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule (DBPR) Public Meeting	Washington, DC	January 15, 2005
NDWAC	Water Security Working Group Meeting	Phoenix, AZ	January 25-27, 2007

Quarterly Trends

The Safe Drinking Water Hotline receives numerous questions regarding the aesthetic effects of secondary contaminants on the quality of the water. For example, the Hotline receives questions on the causes and potential health effects of unfamiliar odors to the drinking water. The following table illustrates the number of questions received during the first quarter of fiscal year 2005 in reaction to a particular drinking water characteristic.

Characteristic	Questions (phone and e-mail)
Color*	30
Odor	20
Deposition/Staining**	15
Taste	11
Particles	6
Corrosion	3
Cosmetic	2
Biota***	2
Total	**89**

*Includes cloudy/dirty water
**Ex., buildup of bacterial growth on bathroom fixtures
***Includes visible biota in the water such as worms

Frequently Asked Qs & As

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions not necessarily represented in one of the Top Ten Topic categories.

Q: How is EPA celebrating the 30th anniversary of the 1974 Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)?

A: EPA has developed special materials to commemorate the SDWA 30th anniversary, including two articles and a series of fact sheets. The articles discuss the success stories of three communities working to protect drinking water and the progress that EPA and the United States have made towards providing safe drinking water. The fact sheets provide basic information about the SDWA, as well as information about specific drinking water topics such as costs, standards, treatment, monitoring, compliance and enforcement, source water protection, underground injection wells, and public involvement. Throughout 2005, EPA will also celebrate the success of the SDWA and conduct an educational campaign focused on four themes: "Community Water Systems: The Backbone of Public Health;" "Protecting Sources of Drinking Water;'' "Public Involvement in Safe Drinking Water;'' and "Planning for the Future." More information about the 30th anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwa/30th.

Q: How does the underground injection control (UIC) program help protect sources of drinking water?

A: The UIC program is a crucial component of the source water assessment and protection program because it identifies, permits, and regulates the design, siting, operation, and maintenance of injection wells that are designed to dispose of waste underground. It is the major federal and state program to control approximately 800,000 wells with the potential to contaminate drinking water sources if not properly managed. The program identifies those wells that are considered potential contaminant sources in any source water assessment and protection program contaminant source inventory. For example, all new motor vehicle waste disposal wells (e.g., service station bay floor drains) and all new large-capacity cesspools (e.g., serving multiple dwellings or single units serving more than twenty persons per day) were banned as of April 2000. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires EPA to provide safeguards so that injection wells or other similar conveyance systems do not endanger current and future underground sources of drinking water.

Through the UIC program, EPA has developed minimum federal standards to regulate wells that range from deep, technically-sophisticated and highly-monitored wells, to shallow on-site drainage systems such as septic systems, cesspools, and storm water drainage wells. These requirements also cover wells that discharge a variety of hazardous and non-hazardous fluids above, into, or below aquifers.

EPA's main concern relative to the source water assessment and protection program is the large inventory of Class V UIC wells — typically shallow on-site drainage systems such as septic systems, cesspools, and storm water drainage wells. They are a concern because their simple construction provides little or no treatment of the injected fluids. There are more than 500,000 Class V wells in operation (*Consider the Source: A Pocket Guide to Protecting Your Drinking Water*, EPA 816-K-02-002, June 2002).

Q: Does the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulate single-family residential septic systems?

A: The SDWA does not regulate single family residential septic systems. The SDWA Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program regulates owners and operators of septic system wells used to inject the waste or effluent from a multiple dwelling, business establishment, community, or regional business septic tank. The UIC requirements do not apply to single-family residential septic system wells, nor to non-residential septic system wells that are used solely for the disposal of sanitary waste and have the capacity to serve fewer than twenty persons per day (40 CFR 144.81(9)). However, most states and localities regulate the siting, design, and construction of septic systems. Contact your state or local health department for information on septic system regulations in your community. Additional information regarding septic systems and state and local contacts are available at www.epa.gov/owm/septic.

Q: Does the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulate private household drinking water wells?

A: The SDWA only applies to public water systems, not to private household drinking water wells. However, EPA does recommend that household well owners test annually for nitrates, total coliform bacteria, pH, and total dissolved solids. Well owners

should also check annually with a local agency such as a health or agricultural department to determine if there are any specific contaminants of concern in their local area (e.g., pesticides or fertilizers). In addition, state or local government may regulate private wells. Links to state Web sites and other information about private household drinking water wells is available from EPA at www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells.

Information is also available from non-profit organizations that work with private well owners, such as the Water Systems Council's wellcare Hotline, or the American Ground Water Trust (AGWT). The wellcare Hotline is available online at www.watersystemscouncil.org/wellcarehotline or by contacting (888) 395-1033. AGWT is available online at www.agwt.org or by contacting (800) 423-7748.

Q: How can I identify potential sources of pollution for my private household well?

A: Private household well owners should conduct a survey around the well to identify potential sources of contamination. As part of the survey, well owners should determine if there is livestock nearby, if pesticides are used on nearby agricultural crops or nurseries, if lawn fertilizer is used near the well, if the well is downstream from a septic system, if the well is located near a road that is frequently salted or sprayed with de-icers during the winter, or if household wastes or used motor oil is disposed of on the land surrounding the well. In addition to the immediate area around a well, the owner should investigate other possible sources of contamination that may already be part of the community or may be moving into the area. Consulting with local experts, such as the local health department, agricultural extension agents, nearby water systems, and local university geologists, can assist in determining potential sources of contamination. Well owners should also attend any local planning or appeal hearings to learn more about the construction of facilities that may pollute the local drinking water, and ask to see the environmental impact statement on the project. Additional information is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/whatyoucando.html.

Q: Do maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) apply to drinking water at a free-flowing tap?

A: EPA believes that Congress intended MCLs to apply to water at the tap; however, EPA has discretion to require monitoring at other locations as long as such monitoring is representative of levels at the tap. In addition, EPA concludes that Congress did not authorize EPA to hold public water systems liable for tap levels to the extent they are due to conditions in the distribution system that are outside the system's control (56 FR 26460, 26477; July 7, 1991).

Q: States with primary enforcement responsibility (primacy states) are required to adopt drinking water regulations no less stringent than the national primary drinking water regulations set by EPA (SDWA 1413(a)(1)). Are primacy states also required to adopt secondary drinking water standards no less stringent that the national secondary drinking water regulations?

A: States are not required to adopt secondary drinking water regulations no less stringent than the federal regulations. States may establish higher or lower levels as appropriate to their particular circumstances and local conditions such as unavailability of alternate raw water sources or other compelling factors, provided that the levels adequately protect public health and welfare (44 FR 42195; July 17, 1979).

Q: We have a water softener that sets the softening cycle based on grains per gallon of hardness. Our water system provided a hardness value in mg/L. What is the conversion factor for mg/L of hardness to grains per gallon of hardness?

A: One grain per gallon of hardness is equivalent to 17.1 mg/L (calcium carbonate equivalent).

Q: Are there any concerns for customers using drinking water with a pH outside the EPA recommended range of 6.5 to 8.5?

A: From a health effects standpoint, a wide range of pH values can be tolerated by persons consuming water. However, values outside the range of the secondary standards of 6.5 to 8.5 can cause increased corrosivity. Corrosive water tends to dissolve metals (e.g., lead, copper) with which it comes into contact. Elevated levels of metals such as lead in drinking water are known to cause adverse health effects. Additionally, at high pH values, the ability of chlorine to provide disinfection protection diminishes and the formation of halogens (e.g., trihalomethanes) increases (42 FR 17143; March 31, 1977).

Q: What method can laboratories use for analysis of perchlorate?

A: EPA Method 314.0 "Determination of Perchlorate in Drinking Water Using Ion Chromatography" can be used for the analysis of perchlorate. In this method, perchlorate is separated and measured using a system comprised of an ion chromatographic pump, sample injection valve, guard column, analytical column, suppressor device, and conductivity detector (65 FR 11372, 11374; March 2, 2000). Additional information regarding the analysis of perchlorate is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/ucmr/aprvlabs.html.

Q: How can my laboratory become approved for Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation (UCMR) perchlorate analysis?

A: Laboratories interested in becoming an approved laboratory for UCMR perchlorate analysis were required to participate in a Performance Testing (PT) Study and submit a request letter to EPA by March 31, 2000. EPA will not be able to consider any letters received after this date. Any interested laboratory that did not meet this deadline or failed to successfully pass the initial PT study was required to submit a request letter by October 6, 2000, in order to be eligible for a second PT study (65 FR 11372; March 2, 2000). The laboratories listed on the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water Web site, www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/ucmr/aprvlabs.html, have successfully completed and passed the EPA-coordinated Spring or Fall 2000 Perchlorate Performance Testing (PT) Study and been approved to conduct perchlorate analysis in support of UCMR.

Q: Does EPA require registration of home water treatment units?

A: EPA only requires registration of home water treatment unit filters that incorporate a disinfectant to inhibit microbial growth. The disinfectant is considered a pesticide under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, thereby requiring registration through the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs, Antimicrobial Division *(Home Water Treatment Units: Filtering Fact from Fiction*, EPA570-9-90-HHH; September 1990).

Q: What does EPA registration of home water treatment units indicate?

A: EPA requires registration of certain filters in home water treatment units that incorporate a disinfectant to inhibit microbial growth. This registration indicates that the manufacturer has shown that the pesticide will not cause adverse health effects when used as directed. Registration does not indicate that EPA approves or endorses a home water treatment unit; any such claim that EPA approves or endorses home water treatment units is false *(Home Water Treatment Units: Filtering Fact from Fiction*, EPA570-9-90-HHH; September 1990).

Q: Is imported bottled water regulated?

A: All bottled water imported into the United States must adhere to United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards and applicable state regulations. Information about bottled water importation is available from the International Bottled Water Association at www.bottledwater.org/public/BWFactsHome_main.htm and from FDA at www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/imports.html.

Quarterly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	2,617
Total number of e-mails received	307
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:37
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	83.8%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of e-mails answered in 5 days	89.3%
Number of times callers were transferred to the WSC Wellcare Hotline	662
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about CCRs	431
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local drinking water quality for PWS customers	560
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing and quality for household well owners	362
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing for PWS customers	705

Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	E-mails
1st Quarter FY 2005	2,617	307
1st Quarter FY 2004	2,998	685

Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. Local Water System	408	17
2. EPA Internet	393	16
3. State PWSS	374	15
4. State Lab Certification	363	15
5. NSF/WQA/UL	185	8
6. AGWT/WSC	98	4
7. Local Public Health	89	4
8. Other	68	3
9. Combined Regions	60	2
10. Other Hotlines	56	2

**A total of 2,417 referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in the 1st Quarter of FY 2005.*

Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	E-mails
Analytical Laboratories	29	12
Citizen - Private Well	191	39
Citizen - PWS	1,616	151
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	145	20
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	79	19
Environmental Groups	6	0
EPA	42	0
Other Federal Agency	20	0
Government, Local	22	3
Government, State	36	3
Government, Tribal	4	0
Spanish Speaking	1	1
International	5	5
Media	9	0
Medical Professional	12	1
Public Water System	194	12
Schools/University	67	36
Other	139	5
TOTALS	2617	307

Topic Categories

Category	Calls	E-mails
Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts		
Chlorine	41	5
Coliforms	224	13
Cryptosporidium	61	0
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	59	6
Disinfection – Home Water	18	2
Other Microbials	71	2
Storage – Home Water	8	0
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	56	7
Trihalomethane (THM)	33	2
Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)		
Arsenic	34	9
Fluoride	15	10
Methyl-*tertiary*-butyl-ether (MTBE)	13	3
Perchlorate	14	4
Phase I, II & V	43	6
Sodium Monitoring	4	0
Sulfate	4	1
Lead and Copper		
Copper	25	1
Lead	247	16
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	13	2
Radionuclides		
Radionuclides (Other)	45	3
Radionuclides (Radon)	103	4
Secondary DW Regulations		
Secondary DW Regulations	91	11
SDWA Background/Overview		
Definitions & Applicability	33	10
MCL List	168	25
Other Background	72	17
SDWA	185	2
Water on Tap	3	0
Other DW Regulations		
Analytical Methods (DW)	73	17
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	17	1
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	236	5
DW Primacy (PWS)	35	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	10	0
Other Drinking Water Security	61	5
Public Notification (PWS)	238	2
Security Planning Grants	7	0
State Revolving Fund (DW)	9	4
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	31	2
Other Drinking Water		
Additives Program	4	4
Bottled Water	71	11
Complaints about PWS	171	10
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	53	0
Home Water Treatment Units	170	20
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	9	2
Local DW Quality	722	58
Tap Water Testing	508	19
Treatment/BATs (DW)	10	7
Drinking Water Source Protection		
Ground Water Rule	7	0
Sole Source Aquifer	1	0
Source Water/Wellhead Protection	27	5
UIC Program	29	2
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	165	39
Non-Environmental	50	9
Non-EPA Environmental	56	22
Other EPA (Programs)	96	37
TOTALS	4,549	442

APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

NOTICES

"Notice of a Public Meeting for an Expert Panel Workshop on Lead Service Line Replacement"
October 4, 2004 (69 FR 59224)

EPA gave notice of an expert panel workshop to discuss issues associated with the Lead and Copper Rule. The workshop held in Atlanta, GA, was to examine and discuss potential issues associated with lead service line replacement.

"National Drinking Water Advisory Council's Water Security Working Group Meeting Announcement"
October 15, 2004 (69 FR 61249)

EPA gave notice of the second public meeting of the Water Security Working Group (WSWG) of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council to be held in Arlington, VA, on October 27-29, 2004. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an opportunity for the WSWG members to continue deliberations on principles and program elements for drinking water and wastewater security programs.

"Notice of Tentative Approval of the Public Water System Supervision Program for the State of Wisconsin"
October 18, 2004 (69 FR 61379)

The Agency gave notice of approval of the revisions that the state of Wisconsin has made to its Public Water System Supervision Program, including the definition of "public water system", administrative penalty authority, the Consumer Confidence Rule, the Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule, and the Stage 1 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule.

"Notice of Tentative Approval of the Public Water System Supervision Program for the State of Maryland"
October 26, 2004 (69 FR 62445)

EPA provided notice of its intent to approve the revisions made by the state of Maryland to its Public Water System Supervision Program. Maryland has revised its administrative penalties for violations of its program including disinfectant residual levels in drinking water and plans for compliance to resolve deficiencies found in sanitary surveys.

"Notice of a Public Meeting of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council"
November 2, 2004 (69 FR 63531)

EPA announced a meeting of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council in Atlanta, GA, on December 1 and 2, 2004. The purpose of the meeting was for the Council to meet with EPA and

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) representatives to discuss public health issues related to the nation's drinking water.

"Notice of a Workshop on Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities"
November 9, 2004 (69 FR 64926)

EPA announced a workshop to discuss issues concerning lead in drinking water in schools and child care facilities. National experts in drinking water and children's health and education were invited to discuss best practices to promote awareness and water testing. The workshop was to be held December 7, 2004, in Washington, DC.

"Notice of a Public Meeting To Discuss Research Related to the Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule"
December 23, 2004 (69 FR 76897)

EPA announced a public meeting to discuss recent research related to the proposed Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 18, 2005.